

February 18, 2004

Dear Member:

As you may know, our "*Operation: Streamline*" plan deals with the consolidating different state agency functions and giving me the responsibility and authority to find efficiencies within my Administration. The ultimate goal of the plan is to eliminate Mississippi's looming \$709 million budget deficit in two years so revenue will be available to fund the many needs of our State. As one news report described "*Operation: Streamline*," it "offer(s) the only plan to date that puts a stop to deficit spending."

Contrary to what some have said, the "*Operation: Streamline*" legislation does not affect funding for education at all. There are no bills dealing with schools, teachers or K-12 funding. My executive budget submitted last month simply accepts the Legislative Budget Committee's unanimous recommendation for K-12 funding - nothing less.

I hope to work with you during this session to try to find revenue to restore K-12 funding to last year's level. Rest assured, we will be more likely to have additional funds available for K-12 spending if the "*Operation: Streamline*" savings are adopted.

Further, I hope you are as opposed as I to the idea that cutting teachers is the way for school districts to meet the Legislative Budget Recommendation. That is the wrong approach, and I won't stand for it.

I hope you will join me in helping streamline our state government, eliminate Mississippi's budget deficit and fund our schools at an appropriate level. These are enormous tasks, but by working together I know we can get them done.

Sincerely,

Haley Barbour
GOVERNOR